

Waste disposal after project

Wheelabrator offers savings to 10 county towns

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Several Sullivan County communities could soon have the option to reduce their solid waste disposal costs without hauling their trash outside the local area when the Sullivan County Regional Refuse Disposal District dissolves in July.

The Antioch New England Institute sent a request for proposal

Claremont to several waste disposal facilities in the region on behalf of 10 communities in the county about the availability and cost for waste disposal.

In a surprising response, Wheelabrator of Claremont proposed a reduced rate of \$75 per ton for a one-year contract.

"Anytime I see prices come down, it's a good sign," Claremont City Manager Guy Santagate said.

Wheelabrator had previously proposed a \$92 per ton tipping fee at its facility when its contract with the New Hampshire - Vermont Solid Waste Project expires.

"For the rural towns, they are going to see a direct savings in their town budget," ANEI spokesman Paul Markowitz said Tuesday.

The towns involved are Acworth, Charlestown, Claremont, Cornish, Croydon, Goshen, Lempster, Newport, Unity and Washington.

"Now that Wheelabrator has put out this number they would be hard pressed to charge more," Markowitz said when asked whether the quoted price could change.

ANEI is a nonprofit consulting and community outreach organization that has been working with towns in Sullivan County for the past year to devise a solution to their waste disposal problems.

The \$75 per ton bid from Wheelabrator was not the lowest bid. Seneca Meadows landfill in New York came in at \$74.50 per ton. Other competitive bids were from the Mt. Carberry landfill in Berlin, N.H., at \$75.50 per ton and the Northeast Waste Services landfills in Moretown, Vt., and South Hadley, Mass., both at \$77.50 per ton.

"What this did is we opened up the market a bit," Markowitz said. "Our goal was to provide towns with options."

According to ANEI, 12 of the 15 communities in Sullivan County send an estimated 23,000 tons of solid waste to the Wheelabrator incinerator per year. With a reduction in the tipping fee of \$17 per ton, those towns could see an overall savings of \$390,000 per year after the contact with Wheelabrator expires.

"These bids have simply brought market forces to bear in Sullivan County," ANEI Executive Director James Gruber said. "Sullivan County towns now have plenty of short-term options available to them to reduce their waste disposal costs. Towns can save even more money by increasing the amount they recycle."

The request for proposal from ANEI was funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in partnership with the Waste Action Collaborative of Sullivan County.

The proposed contract does not carry a minimum tonnage requirement, which caused the tipping fee under the current contract to exceed \$100 per ton when the project failed to meet the guaranteed annual tonnage.